

Survival Aid for Emergencies (SAFE) through Medicare Act

Congressman Maxwell Alejandro Frost and Senator Edward Markey

This bill would include solar batteries, heat pumps, and other resiliency measures as eligible Medicare expenses so seniors and people with disabilities can install life-saving, resilient home infrastructure to protect their health in extreme weather and blackouts.

Extreme weather can result in power outages, destruction of living spaces, unsafe temperatures, contaminated water, and other conditions that are especially dangerous for seniors and people who rely on medical devices and treatments that require electricity or must be stored properly. For instance, more than 3.3 million Medicare beneficiaries use insulin, which must be refrigerated to remain effective. Mechanical ventilators rely on consistent power to help seniors and people with disabilities to breathe.

Medical complications related to power outages were responsible for nearly a third of the more than 4,500 deaths attributed to Hurricane Maria. Seniors made up two thirds of Floridians killed by Hurricane Ian. Medicare beneficiaries represent up to 90% of the electricity-dependent population. Even when the grid stays on, seniors bear the brunt of the consequences of lack of basic home infrastructure like central air, which becomes deadly during worsened heatwaves.

The **SAFE through Medicare** Act requires Medicare to cover the full cost of equipment medically necessary for individuals who are medically at-risk in the event of a climate or manmade disaster. The full list of Medicare-covered home resiliency services would be defined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. These may include:

- Solar batteries
- Heat pumps
- Air conditioning
- Refrigerators
- Generators

The **SAFE through Medicare** Act will enable our health care system and Medicare recipients to be prepared for the dangerous impacts of climate change and other destabilizing emergencies.

Endorsed by: Disability Rights Florida, American Federation of Teachers, American College of Nurse Midwives, Climate and Community Project, Health Care Without Harm, National Hispanic Medical Association, and others.